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ABSTRACT

This document discusses Learning Enhancement Teams (LETs). Working together, social studies teachers from grades K-12, science teachers, vocational education teachers, curriculum specialists, instructional support services personnel, media specialists, contracted services representatives, administrators, and community resource people design instructional units that can be easily infused into existing subject matter curriculum or can provide the basis of a holistic curriculum across the several grades. In this way a social studies core curriculum, addressing the need for students to be aware of their surroundings, both immediate and distant, can be designed to include elements of the natural and physical sciences and vocational education. This integrated studies programs blends selected concepts, content knowledge, and subject specific skills into a holistic model that emphasizes the continuous acquisition, application, reinforcement, and refinement of information and abilities in the social studies, the sciences, and vocational education. Such a curriculum trains students to become nature sensitive, culture literate, skilled workers. Contains 10 references. (DK)

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HUMANS & ENVIRONMENT
LEARNING PROGRAM
(HELP)

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LETs Integrate The Curriculum

Learning Enhancement Teams and the Social Studies Core

A MONOLOGUE

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HUMANS & ENVIRONMENT
LEARNING PROGRAM
(HELP)

The ECO/SOCIAL Studies approach to environmental education and multicultural studies focuses students' attention on the character of diverse natural and social (human-made) environments as well as the day-to-day interaction(s) and interdependence between environs.

Since 1981, GLOBAL HORIZONS: The Center for Applied ECO/SOCIAL Studies has designed four unique instructional programs that are continuous (K-12), integrated (multi-disciplinary) , and sequential (developmental) in nature.

STUDENT ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS (SEA) introduces students to the nature and character of lifespace environments that are nearby/close-to-home. These environments are experienced, directly, through the several senses, and are preceived as being relevant phenomena in one's daily life. Phenomena include people, places, things, locations and sites, natural processes, and artifacts. An emphasis is placed on field-based studies that include nature walks, field trips, and anthropological digs.

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT (ME) program activities enable students to interact with the local lifespace environment through hiking daytrips, overnight hiking/camping activities, and canoe trips. Students learn life survival skills and apply them in real life excursions into the lifespace. Their abilities are challenged and self esteem is enhanced through successful completion of life-oriented experiences.

PEOPLE IN THEIR ENVIRONMENTS (PIE) involves students in the study of selected human groups -- past and present. Attention is paid to human adaptation to natural surroundings and to the history of cultural development. Working in small inquiry teams, students

role play researching social scientists -- using the PROACTIVE ACTION MODEL (PAM), a modified scientific method schema, and the STUDENT AWARENESS of GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTS (SAGE) matrix.

HUMANS/ENVIRONMENT LEARNING PROGRAM (H/ELP) provides students with opportunities to investigate conflicts, issues, problems, and situations that impact their singular and collective lives -- nearby/close-to-home and distant/far-removed. The total lifespace environment of the local community, the region, state/province, nation, and global village becomes a learning laboratory for direct and vicarious experiences. Acting in real life and real-to-life (simulated) situations, students are encouraged to be proactive -- to inquire, to discover, to ponder courses-of-action, to make decisions, and act in constructive ways so as to resolve conflicts, clarify issues, solve problems, and/or better understand situations.

NATURE SENSITIVE students 1) are aware of the natural world around them - including the physical geography of earth's surface, 2) are informed about past and present conflicts, issues, problems, and situations related to natural environments, 3) have empathy for the plight of nature - locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, 4) understand the character of diverse natural environments that are nearby/close-to-home and distant/far-removed, 5) have developed attitudes and opinions about ecology-related issues in contemporary life, 6) perceive relationships between humans and nature, and 7) are committed to proactive action.

CULTURE LITERATE students 1) are aware of the human-made (social) world around them - including the cultural geography of earth's surface, 2) are informed about past and present conflicts, issues, problems, and situations related to social environments, 3) have empathy for the plight of diverse human groups, 4) understand the character of social environments that are nearby/close-to-home and distant/far-removed, 5) have developed attitudes and opinions about culture-related issues in contemporary life, 6) perceive relationships between human groups, 7) recognize the differences/similarities among the traits of diverse human groups, and 8) are committed to proactive action.

In addition to becoming 'nature sensitive' and 'culture literate', students must focus their attention on becoming skilled workers in the 21st Century economy.

Thus, a social studies core curriculum - addressing the need for students to be aware of their immediate/distant surroundings, can be designed to include elements of the natural/physical sciences and vocational education.

This Integrated Studies Program (ISP) blends selected concepts, content knowledge, and subject-specific skills into a holistic model that emphasizes the continuous acquisition, application, reinforcement, and refinement (proficiency) of information and abilities in the social studies, the sciences, and vocational education.

LETs

Working together, social studies teachers (K-12), science teachers, vocational education teachers, curriculum specialists, instructional support services personnel, media specialists, contracted services representatives, administrators, and community resource people design instructional units that can be easily infused into existing subject-matter curriculums OR can provide the basis of a holistic curriculum across the several grades.

LET members realize that each student has a preferred learning style; that he/she utilizes combinations of multiple intelligences; and that he/she is motivated to participate in the learning process for different reasons. Thus, the team designs a learning encounter menu that provides for an array of ways by which different students can work at common tasks - and experience success in different ways.

THE INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Across the K-12 spectrum, students are introduced to, and directly/actively involved in activities and experiences related to, career education, the social studies, natural/physical sciences, and human development in the context of social groups.

CAREER EDUCATION. This component consists of three phases:

Career Awareness

Career Exploration

Career Skills Development

(SEE DIAGRAM I PAGE 5)

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS. This component emphasizes natural and human-made surroundings (and related phenomena and processes) that are nearby/close to home AND distant/far-removed (possibly on a global scale). An emphasis is placed on MAN and NATURE interactions and interdependence.

(SEE DIAGRAMS II and III PAGES 6+7)

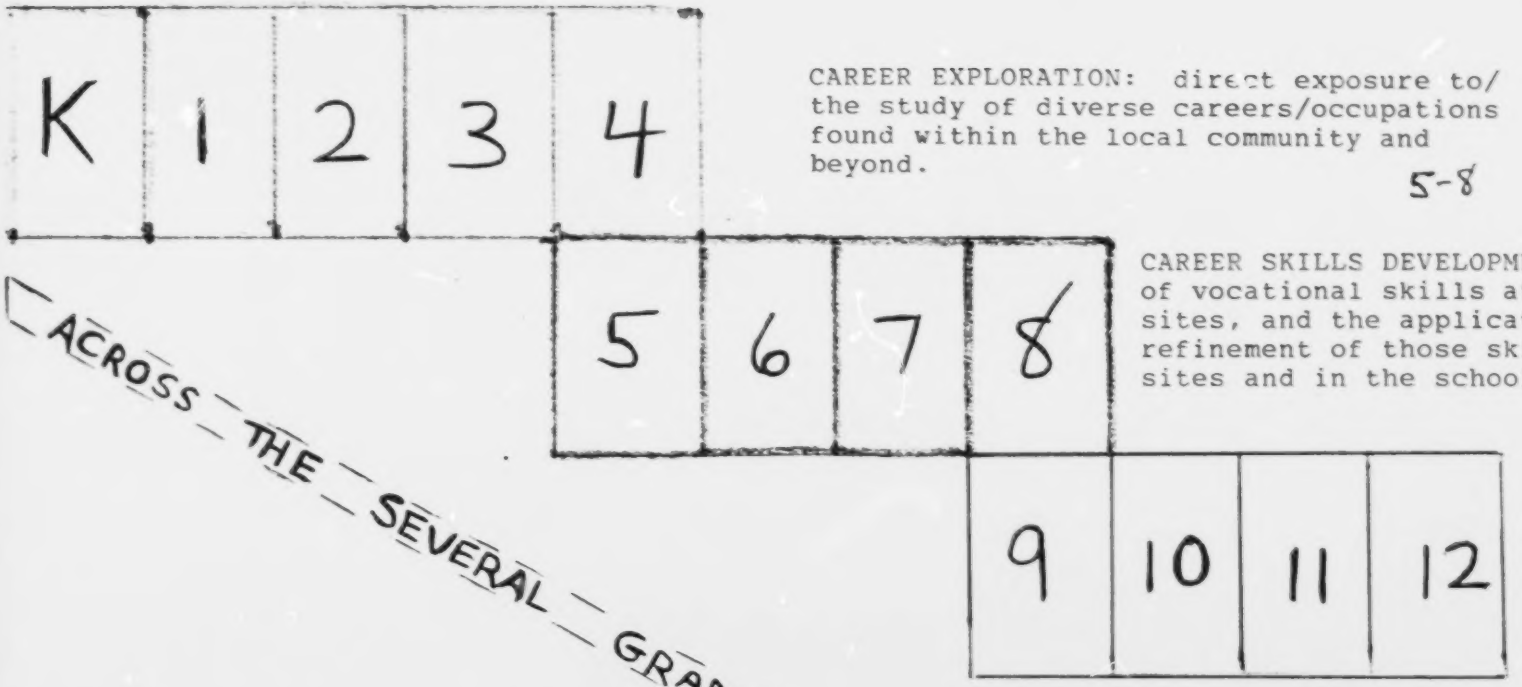
CITIZENSHIP/HUMAN RELATIONS. An emphasis is placed on developing interpersonal skills (thus allowing the individual to adapt to diverse social settings and situations) and commitment to fellows and society.

(SEE DIAGRAM IV PAGE 8)

CAREER AWARENESS: a formal introduction to work as a concept, and to the world of work found within the local community; community helpers.

K-4

ACROSS THE GRADE CLUSTER



CAREER EXPLORATION: direct exposure to/ the study of diverse careers/occupations found within the local community and beyond.

5-8

CAREER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: the acquaition of vocational skills at community resource sites, and the application/reinforcement/ refinement of those skills at field-based sites and in the school.

9-12

A continuous process of awareness, exploration, and skills development in the classroom and at field-based sites - with community resource people serving as skills development instructors/supervisors.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS:
an introduction to/study of the character and structure of natural/social areas and related phenomena. K-4

ACROSS THE GRADE CLUSTER

K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS:
an in-depth study of natural/social areas that exist close-to-home/far-removed. Direct exposure to/interaction with phenomena at field-based sites. 5-8

5 | 6 | 7 | 8

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS:
investigation of conflicts/issues/problems/situations involving areas and phenomena as well as involvement in community service activities/projects. 9-12

9 | 10 | 11 | 12

ACROSS THE SEVERAL GRADE CLUSTERS

A continuous process of awareness, exploration, and skills development in the classroom and at field-based sites - with community resource people serving as skills development instructors/supervisors.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS: an introduction to the characteristics of natural regions in the immediate area, and to the character of the local community as well as areas/regions within a given distance of the immediate lifespace environment. K-4

ACROSS THE GRADE CLUSTER

K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS/ DIVERSE CULTURES: an introduction to the traits/customs of different ethnic groups found close-to-home and far-removed from the immediate lifespace environment. A continued study of natural/social environments on a regional/ national/international dimension. 5-8

5 | 6 | 7 | 8

ACROSS THE SEVERAL GRADE CLUSTERS

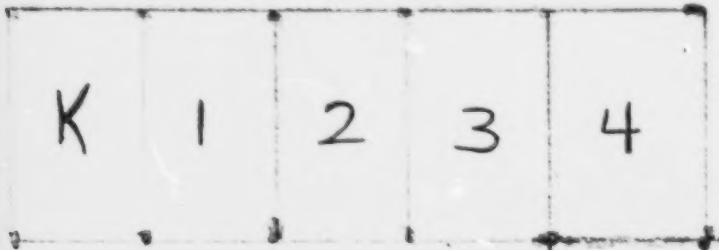
9 | 10 | 11 | 12

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS/ DIVERSE CULTURES: a continued study of these phenomena/settings as students apply researching skills to data collection, and design plans to resolve conflicts/clarify issues/solve problems/ better understand situations of common concern to diverse social groups. 9-12

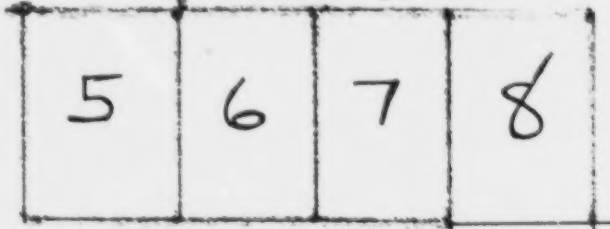
A continuous process of awareness, exploration, and skills development in the classroom and at field-based sites - with community resource people serving as skills development instructors/ supervisors.

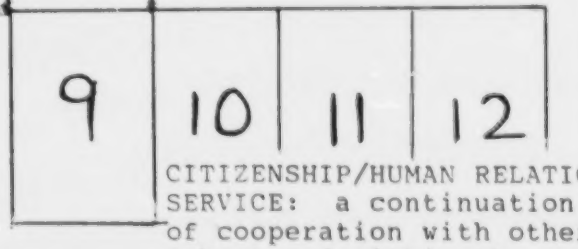
CITIZENSHIP/HUMAN RELATIONS: development of a sense of personal responsibility to the collective group/society, and an understanding of the rights/responsibilities of being a citizen (active/participating member) of that society. K-4

ACROSS THE GRADE CLUSTER



CITIZENSHIP/HUMAN RELATIONS/COMMUNITY SERVICE: the development of a cooperative nature as a result of working with others both in the classroom and during field-based activities. An understanding of social conflicts/issues/problems/siutations that need to be attended to/corrected for the common good. 5-8



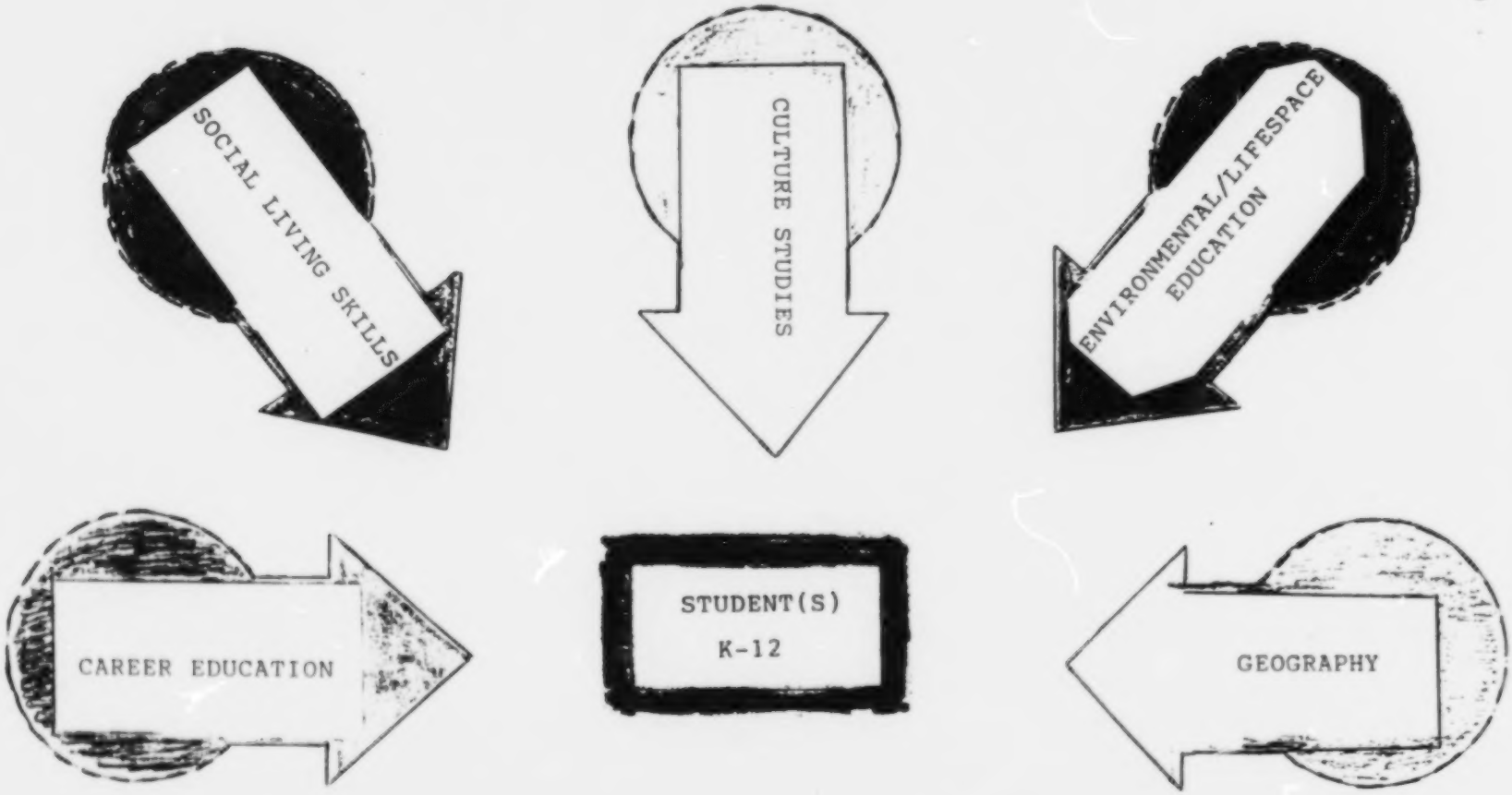


ACROSS THE SEVERAL GRADE CLUSTERS

CITIZENSHIP/HUMAN RELATIONS/COMMUNITY SERVICE: a continuation of the process of cooperation with others - both in the school and within the context of the community lifespace. The in-depth study of contemporary issues/cultures/movements and the development of proactive strategies to resolve conflicts/clarify issues/solve problems/better understand situations. 9-12

A continuous process of awareness, exploration, and skills development in the classroom and at field-based sites - with community resource people serving as skills development instructors/ supervisors.

DIAGRAM IV



concepts/knowledge/skills ACQUISITION: amassing data/skills through teacher-directed instruction, independent/group research, observations, interviews, interaction with role playing simulations, etc.

concepts/knowledge/skills APPLICATION: using amassed data/skills in real life/vicarious situations to resolve conflicts, clarify issues, solve problems, and/or better understand situations affecting natural/social environments and related phenomena.

concepts/knowledge/skills REINFORCEMENT: the continuous application of amassed data/skills to perceived conflicts, issues, problems, and/or situations affecting natural/social environments and related phenomena/processes (practice).

concepts/knowledge/skills REFINEMENT: the continuous application (practice) of acquired/reinforced concepts/knowledge/skills - leading to the attainment of mastery or proficiency.

CAREER EDUCATION GOALS (K-12)

Students will:

- develop a positive SELF concept. WHO AM I as an individual? What makes me special? WHO AM I as a member of social groups? WHO AM I as a member of the larger society?
- comprehend the nature and character of diverse careers and occupations.
- develop personal work ethics.
- be exposed to diverse careers and occupations.
- understand the importance of formal education to achieving career aspirations.
- comprehend the relationship between that which is learned at field-based sites in the community to that which is studied and learned in classrooms.
- interact with community resource people who possess career/occupations skills.
- understand that the economic well-being of society is dependent upon the abilities and skills of the work force.
- understand the interrelationships between natural resources and the economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GOALS (K-12)

Students will:

- understand the character and origins of natural settings (and related phenomena/processes) that are nearby/close to home AND distant/far-removed.
- understand the character and origins of human-made settings (and related phenomena/processes) that are nearby/close to home AND distant/far-removed.
- interact with natural/social settings (and related phenomena/processes) either directly through field-based studies OR vicariously through audiovisual presentations that provide real-to-life (simulated) experiences.
- understand the interrelationships and interdependence that exist between MAN and NATURE nearby/close to home AND distant/far-removed.
- develop a sense of stewardship - a personal need to maintain a quality lifespace environment.
- develop an environmental ethic.
- develop an understanding of the basic structure and functions of human societies - past and present, simple and complex, and primitive or advanced.
- understand that all peoples, regardless of diverse culture traits, are alike.

- understand that MAN has adapted to natural surroundings.
- understand that MAN has manipulated NATURE to suit the needs of human groups.
- understand the characteristics of:

  polar zones

  coastal plains

  mountain regions

  marshes/wetlands

  prairies

  deserts

  tropical rain forests.

OH, STEWARDSHIP

Too often, in the past, MAN looked to the forests and viewed bounteous trees of gargantuan proportions. CUT THEM DOWN!

He next turned his attention to ...

the churning seas and discovered fishes galore. CATCH THEM ALL!

the blue skies and witnessed the migration of countless numbers of birds. SHOOT THEM DOWN!

nature's finite mineral resources. DIG THEM UP!

the rolling hills and majestic mountains. TEAR THEM DOWN!

the sparkling, rushing waters of mighty rivers. DAM THEM UP!

the kaleidoscopic hue of wild flowers aglow in the sunlight. PLOW THEM UNDER!

Wherever MAN looked he saw NATURE and had an insatiable urge to master it -- even to destroy it!

CITIZENSHIP/HUMAN RELATIONS GOALS (K-12)

Students will:

- identify the several social groups to which they belong.
- develop a sense of civic responsibility to others and to the community-at-large.
- understand the functions of local/state/national government and related agencies.
- develop a social ethic.
- be involved in community service projects.
- participate in citizenship skills-building activities, e.g., debating contemporary issues, voting, writing letters to the editor, volunteering time/effort to community projects.
- work in cooperative groups.
- tolerate opposite points-of-view.
- develop compromising skills.
- adapt to diverse social situations.
- recognize the differences/similarities that exist among diverse cultures and human groups that are nearby/close to home AND distant/far-removed.

BACKGROUND

In the late 1980s, the Science/Technology/Society scheme focused on making school science more educationally relevant and generalizable to the majority of students. Because science and technology shape modern culture and impact our individual and collective lives, STS was issues-based, provided students with hands-on experiences, and connected science with real life -- as students learned the methods of citizenship action.

In Charting a Course: Social Studies for the 21st Century, the Curriculum Task Force (National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, 1989) stated that social studies provides the connection between the humanities and the natural and physical sciences. To assist students to see the interrelationships among branches of knowledge, integration of other subject matter with social studies should be encouraged.

The National Council for the Social Studies definition of 'social studies' includes appropriate content from the natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

The National Committee on Science Education and Assessment (1993) stated what students should know and be able to do regarding historical, societal, and cultural aspects of science. Students should be able to: incorporate scientific inquiry skills in personal, civic, and political decisions; incorporate scientific facts, concepts, principles, and theories in personal, civic, and

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political decisions; abd recognize that science and technology are influenced by the culture in which they operate and, in turn, influence and affect that culture.

The Geography Education Standards Project (1993) identified three content outcomes related to the blending of science and social studies concepts, knowledge, and subject-specific skills into a continuous (K-12), integrated (multi-discipline), and sequential (developmental) curriculum.

> SPACE AND PLACE: Knowledge and understanding of geographic information related to spatial patterns on Earth's surface;
>
> ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY: Knowledge and understanding of the interactions between the environment and society -- how people adapt to, depend upon, are affected by, and modify the natural environment;
>
> SPATIAL DYNAMICS AND CONNECTIONS: Students' understanding of geography as it relates to regional variation and conncetions among people and places.

Writing in Social Education (Peters, 1993), this author stated that students in the social studies should become nature sensitive. They should be aware of the natural world around them; be informed about past and present conflicts, issues, problems, and situations related to the natural environment; have empathy for the plight of nature; understand the character of diverse natural environments both nearby/close to home and distant/far-removed; have developed attitudes and opinions about ecology-related issues in contemporary

life; and perceive relationships between humans and nature.

ECO/SOCIAL STUDIES: AN INTEGRATED SUBJECTS APPROACH

Because MAN and NATURE are dependent upon each other for their existence and prosperity, there is a need to create and maintain 'cooperative living habitats'. Within these settings an harmonic cord is struck -- what is good for one is good for the other!

In science and social studies classes, students (ECOnauts) explore the total lifespace environment of the community -- interacting with/studying natural and social phenomena.

Functioning as natural/social scientists, students investigate real conflicts, issues, problems, and situations that exist within the context of their respective communities. They become concerned about the immediate/long-range effects of environmental dilemma upon their individual and collective lives. National Education Goal #3 states that by the year 2000, every school in America will ensure that ALL students learn to use their minds well - so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship.

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